

JOURNAL OF CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
June 15, 2021

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Tracy Houck, Mary Sheehy Moe, Rick Tryon, and Owen Robinson.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney Sara Sexe; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig; Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond; Police Chief Jeff Newton; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones and Fire Marshal Mike McIntosh; and, City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

Public participation is welcome as follows:

- Attend in person. Please refrain from attending in person if you are not feeling well.
- Provide public comments via email. Comments may be sent via email before 12:00 PM the day of the meeting to: commission@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name and address of the commenter. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration; and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.
- Call-in. The public may call in during specific public comment periods at 406-761-4786. All callers will be in a queued system and are asked to remain on hold and be patient. Calls will be taken in the order in which they are received. Callers will be restricted to customary time limits. This is a pilot service to test the feasibility of expanded public participation by phone. We ask for your patience in the event there are technical difficulties.
- The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The public may view and listen to the meeting on cable channel 190, or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. GREAT FALLS FIRE RESCUE (GFFR) CODE ENFORCEMENT AND FEE STRUCTURE

Fire Marshal Mike McIntosh reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint presentation:

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**GFFR CODE ENFORCEMENT
AND FEE STRUCTURE**
PRESENTED BY FIRE MARSHAL MIKE MCINTOSH

GFFR'S FPB IS FACING 4 PRESSING ISSUES

1. COMPLIANCE OF THE ANNUAL SIC INSPECTIONS (SIC)
2. SUBMISSION AND COMPLIANCE OF INSPECTION, TESTING AND MAINTENANCE (ITM) REPORTS
3. REPEATED FALSE ACTIVATION OF FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS
4. LACK OF ADOPTION OF SECTION 105 PERMITS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE (IFC)

**THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF GFFR'S
INSPECTION PROGRAM AND FEE'S**

- GFFR MANAGES THE CITIES SAFETY INSPECTION (SIC) PROGRAM
- GFFR SIC FEES VARY BASED OFF OF TIER STRUCTURE AND NEW ISSUANCE OR RENEWAL
- GFFR RECEIVES THE FUNDS FROM THE SIC PROGRAM THAT ARE APPLIED TO THE OVERALL GFFR OPERATIONAL BUDGET
- FROM THE OBTAINMENT OF AN SIC, GFFR CONDUCTS LIFE SAFETY INSPECTIONS
- THESE LIFE SAFETY INSPECTIONS INCLUDE THE INITIAL INSPECTION AND ALL SUBSEQUENT RE-INSPECTIONS THEREAFTER TO ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE
- NO OTHER FEES ARE ASSESSED FOR ANY OTHER INSPECTION OTHER THEN THE SIC FEE

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**THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF GFFR'S
INSPECTION PROGRAM AND FEE'S CONTINUED**

- GFFR REQUIRES CONTRACTORS TO OBTAIN PERMITS FOR FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS, FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS, KITCHEN HOOD SYSTEMS AND FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEMS
- THESE PERMIT FEE'S ARE COLLECTED BY PROPERTY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- GFFR CHARGES A \$100 FEE FOR CONDUCTING FIRE LINE FLUSHES
- OUTSIDE OF THESE PERMITS, GFFR AND THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS DO NOT REQUIRE ANY OTHER PERMITS ALLOWED BY SECTION 105 PERMITS OF THE IFC
- GFFR CAN ISSUE A \$20 TICKET FOR FIRE LANE VIOLATION, THESE MONIES GO TO THE GENERAL FUND

**ISSUES WITH GFFR'S CURRENT STRUCTURE-LIFE
SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

- MULTIPLE VISITS TO BUSINESSES TO GAIN CODE COMPLIANCE ON ANNUAL INSPECTIONS
- MAN HOURS SPENT DRAFTING COMPLIANCE LETTERS IN CONJUNCTION WITH CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AFTER REPEATED NONCOMPLIANCE OF ANNUAL INSPECTIONS
- DRAWN OUT PROCESS TO GAIN OVERALL COMPLIANCE ON ANNUAL INSPECTIONS
- INHERENT LACK OF TEETH WITH THE CURRENT STRUCTURE

OTHER JURISDICTIONS INSPECTION STRUCTURE

- GFFR REVIEWED THE INSPECTION FEE STRUCTURE FOR A WIDE VARIANCE OF JURISDICTIONS
- THE JURISDICTIONS REVIEWED ARE FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND RANGE FROM LARGE MUNICIPALITIES TO COUNTY FIRE DISTRICTS
- GFFR STAFF FOUND THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE JURISDICTIONS HAVE A TIERED FEE STRUCTURE FOR INSPECTIONS
- GFFR STAFF FOUND THAT MANY OF THESE JURISDICTIONS HAVE A POLICY OR ORDINANCE IN PLACE FOR FALSE ALARMS
- GFFR STAFF FOUND THAT MOST ALL OF THESE JURISDICTIONS HAVE ADOPTED THE PERMITTING SECTION OF THE FIRE CODE

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SOME OF THE JURISDICTIONS RESEARCHED

- SAN DIEGO, CA
- DENVER, CO
- SEATTLE, WA
- BOISE, ID
- DURHAM, NC
- CEDAR RAPIDS, IA
- FORT WAYNE, IN
- DICKINSON, ND
- ANGLE, NM
- MISSOULA, MT
- REDMOND, WA

GFFR PROPOSED FIRE INSPECTION FEES

- INITIAL LIFE SAFETY (SIG) INSPECTION FEE COVERED BY SIG APPLICATION OR RENEWAL FEE
- 1ST REINSPECTION NO FEE
- 2ND REINSPECTION \$200 FEE
- 3RD REINSPECTION \$300 FEE
- IF VIOLATIONS ARE NOT CORRECTED ON 3RD REINSPECTION THE ISSUE NOW REFERRED TO CITY ATTORNEY TO PURSUE CITY ORDINANCE SECTION 15.9.050 VIOLATION-PENALTY

FALSE ACTIVATION OF FIRE ALARMS

- IN 2020, GFFR RESPONDED TO 116 ALARM SYSTEM ACTIVATION, NO FIRE FOUND
- IN 2020 GFFR RESPONDED TO ANOTHER 218 CALLS FOR VARIOUS CODING OF ALARM ACTIVATION
- AS OF MAY 26, 2021 GFFR HAS RESPONDED TO 47 ALARM SYSTEM ACTIVATIONS AND 121 CALLS FOR VARIOUS ALARM ACTIVATION

FALSE ACTIVATION OF FIRE ALARMS

- WHEN FIRE ALARMS ARE ACTIVATED GFFR'S STANDARD RESPONSE IS 1 BATTALION CHIEF AND 2 ENGINES
- THERE IS THE POTENTIAL FOR THIS RESPONSE TO BE 1 BATTALION CHIEF AND 3 ENGINES
- FOR FIRE ALARM CALLS, A CODE 3 RESPONSE IS REQUIRED
- WITH THE CODE 3 RESPONSE REQUIREMENT, GFFR STAFF AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS COULD BE PUT IN HARMS WAY FOR A FALSE ALARM
- REPEATED ACTIVATION OF ALARM SYSTEMS PLACES GFFR STAFF AND THE COMMUNITY AT AN EVEN GREATER RISK
- THERE IS ALSO THE FACT THAT AFTER SO MANY REPEATED ALARM ACTIVATIONS, PEOPLE BEGIN TO IGNORE THE ALARMS

GFFR FALSE ALARM PROPOSAL

- GFFR IS PROPOSING THAT THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS ADOPT A FALSE ALARM POLICY
- FEE FOR FALSE ALARM RESPONSE: IN THE EVENT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONDS TO A FALSE ALARM, A FEE OF TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$200) SHALL BE IMPOSED UPON THE OWNER OR RESPONSIBLE PERSON OF THE PROPERTY SERVED FOR THE THIRD AND EACH SUBSEQUENT FALSE ALARM AT THE SAME PROPERTY IN A CALENDAR YEAR. ANY FEE PAYABLE TO THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS THAT REMAINS UNPAID 30 DAYS AFTER IMPOSITION OF THE FEE IS DELINQUENT AND MAY BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE TAX PARCEL SERVED AS A SPECIAL CHARGE FOR CURRENT SERVICE, OR BE SUBJECT TO A COLLECTION AGENCY

INSPECTION, TESTING AND MAINTENANCE

- COMMUNITIES NO LONGER ARE ACCEPTING HIGH RISK SITUATION WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN REDUCED OR AVOIDED ALTOGETHER!
- ITM COMPLIANCE IS PROACTIVE AND FOCUSED ON STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES TO MINIMIZE RISK AND LOSS IN THE COMMUNITY!

THE RELIANCE ON FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS

FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE!

- SYSTEMS ARE THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE WHEN A FIRE OCCURS!

- THERE IS A HUGE RELIANCE ON KNOWING WHETHER OR NOT THESE SYSTEMS ARE FUNCTIONING.

- ITM CONNECTS THE ENTITIES, OR KEY PARTNERS, INVOLVED WITH FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY!

MAINTENANCE MATTERS!

- OVER 50% OF SYSTEM FAILURES ARE DUE TO LACK OF MAINTENANCE.

- PROPER ITM CAN INCREASE SYSTEM SUCCESS RATE BY AS MUCH AS 96% FOR ALL STRUCTURE TYPES!

- OVERALL, ITM REDUCES PROPERTY DAMAGE AND SAVES LIVES!!!

ISSUES WITH GFFR'S CURRENT STRUCTURE-FIRE CONTRACTOR INSPECTION REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE

- CURRENTLY GFFR REQUESTS THAT CONTRACTORS SUBMIT COPIES OF INSPECTION REPORTS TO GFFR FOR FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS, FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS AND KITCHEN HOOD SYSTEMS
- COMPLIANCE WITH THIS REQUEST IS LESS THAN 50% WITH CONTRACTORS
- OF THOSE REPORTS SUBMITTED TO GFFR, THOSE WITH DISCREPANCIES NOTED, CONTRACTOR FOLLOW UP WITH GFFR ON CORRECTIONS IS LIMITED
- WITH THE CURRENT SYSTEM AND OVER HALF THE CONTRACTORS NOT SUBMITTING REPORTS TO GFFR, GFFR DOES NOT KNOW THE STATUS OF MANY OF THE LIFE SAFETY SYSTEMS WITHIN THE CITY-THIS IS A MAJOR ISSUE

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GFFR FIRE CONTRACTOR COMPLIANCE PROPOSAL

- GFFR FM DEVELOP CITY ORDINANCE REQUIRING ALL FIRE SYSTEM CONTRACTORS TO SUBMIT INSPECTION, TESTING AND MAINTENANCE (ITM) OF FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY SYSTEM REPORTS, THIS IS SUPPORTED BY THE FIRE CODE
- PROPOSED AMENDED CODE LANGUAGE: "INSPECTIONS AND TESTS SHALL BE BY QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS, WHO SHALL FORWARD A REPORT OF INSPECTION TO THE FIRE CODE OFFICIAL UPON COMPLETION"
- PARTNER WITH INSPECTION REPORTS ONLINE TO BE THE CITIES 3RD PARTY COMPANY TO HAVE ITM REPORTS SUBMITTED AND REVIEWED

ADOPT THE PERMITTING SECTION OF THE IFC

- CURRENTLY THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS HAS NOT ADOPTED THIS SECTION OF CODE
- IN GFFR'S RESEARCH OF OTHER JURISDICTIONS, THE MAJORITY OF THESE JURISDICTIONS HAVE ADOPTED SOME FORM OF FIRE PERMITS
- A RECENT BLASTING ISSUE IN GREAT FALLS BROUGHT TO LIGHT THE NEED FOR THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS TO LOOK TO ADOPT THIS SECTION OF THE IFC

JURISDICTIONS WITH PERMITS UNDER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Category	Percentage
Fire Permits	~85%
Under Building Permits	~15%

GFFR'S FIRE PERMIT PROPOSAL

- THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS LOOK TO ADOPT THE PERMITTING SECTION OF THE FIRE CODE WHEN THE NEW VERSION OF THE FIRE CODE IS ADOPTED BY THE STATE OF MONTANA
- GFFR FPB STAFF TO WORK WITH OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS TO DETERMINE WHAT FIRE PERMITS WILL BE APPLICABLE IN GREAT FALLS
- GFFR FPB STAFF TO WORK WITH OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS TO DETERMINE THE PROPER FEE'S FOR FIRE PERMITS
- GFFR FPB STAFF TO WORK WITH THE CITIES LEGAL STAFF TO DETERMINE NON-COMPLIANCE WITH PERMITTING

CONCLUSION

- GFFR IS LOOKING TO IMPLEMENT A TIERED FEE STRUCTURE FOR SIC INSPECTIONS TO BEGIN IN 2022
- GFFR IS LOOKING TO IMPLEMENT AN ITM ORDINANCE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ITM REPORTS. WITH THIS ORDINANCE, GFFR IS LOOKING TO PARTNER WITH IROL AS THE 3RD PARTY SOURCE FOR THE COLLECTION OF ITM REPORTS. IROL WOULD SERVE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN GFFR, CONTRACTORS AND BUSINESSES
- GFFR IS LOOKING TO ADOPT A CITY ORDINANCE FOR REPEATED FALSE ACTIVATION OF FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS
- GFFR AND THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS LOOK TO ADOPT THE PERMITTING SECTION OF THE FIRE CODE WHEN THE STATE OF MONTANA ADOPTS THE LATEST VERSION OF THE IFC

Fire Marshal McIntosh clarified the following in response to Commission inquiries:

Implementation of the tiered fee structure for SIC inspections would begin in calendar year 2022.

There would be no charge for the first inspection and first re-inspection. Charges would start with the third inspection. Fees are based on the number of inspections, not the size of the building.

Inspection Reports Online (IROL) is an inspection reporting business. There is no charge to the City to partner with the business. The contractor is charged \$15.99 per submission of reports, and the business does the initial follow-up. The International Association of Fire Chiefs reports IROL just won a prestigious award and presented at the Community Risk Reduction Conference.

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With regard to competitive bidding, Bozeman stopped using the only other business, Compliance Engine, because they did not have the staff to fully implement the program.

About a handful of the 3,000 SIC inspections each year go before the judge for non-compliance. Usually when they get a court notice, they comply. One case before the judge resulted in a \$20 fine for a fire code violation.

There is a charge for SICs and yearly renewals. Every business is inspected annually.

Alarm, hood, and sprinkler contractors email their reports to GFFR directly. He reviews the reports and, if there are any discrepancies, he works with the contractors to follow up on the discrepancy. That may include multiple trips and visits to the business, and is outside the scope of the annual safety inspection.

If there are no issues during a first business inspection, there is no fee. If they do not comply and GFFR has multiple trips for inspections, the fee goes up and could be referred to the City Attorney. If the non-compliance issue is serious enough in nature he has the availability through the Fire Code to work with the City Attorney's Office if they do not address the issue right there. He could close the business down until they comply. One example that was close to that step involved a national chain not reporting.

Reasons for false alarms includes burnt food in an apartment building, contractors working in facilities and causing dust to go into the system, or pressure surges on sprinkler systems.

Examples of the Fire Code permitting section includes open burning, firework stands, the amount of hazardous materials within a facility, operating a carnival or fair within the City. GFFR would need to work with other City departments and entities to determine what sections they would want to adopt and start enforcing. Backyard fire pits could be excluded. Permits would be required for firework sales, large shows and pyrotechnic displays. Firework sales are allowed within the City limits.

Mayor Kelly summarized that GFFR is requesting approval of this IFC cafeteria approach and authority to implement some permitting that makes sense. Mayor Kelly commented if the Commission approves the request to issue some fiscal responsibility to people for inspections, that the burden also be on GFFR staff to be consistent with their approach to inspections. It is appropriate to charge for repeated false alarms. However, there should be some flexibility to waive the fee for issues that cause a false alarm that are out of the scope of the owner or machinery causing it.

GFFR conducts inspections after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the building department. Per the Fire Code everyone that has a fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system are required to have that system serviced annually. The issue is they are getting the system serviced but are not submitting the reports to GFFR to indicate if there are any discrepancies or issues with the systems.

It was the consensus of the Commission for GFFR to pursue the suggestions offered.

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2. GREAT FALLS FIRE RESCUE (GFFR) – STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Jeremy Jones reported that GFFR continues to fall further behind in its measurements of providing for a safe and effective all hazards response department.

There has been substantial geographical growth in Great Falls, especially in the developments of West Bank Park, downtown revitalization, industrial parks, and neighborhoods to the north and south. Growth is needed and special districts have been established to entice developers to build here in our community. But, with these districts, the General Fund has not grown and the General Fund is where public safety is derived.

Firefighters pride themselves in always being able to do more with less. GFFR has accepted those challenges and made it a point to adapt and overcome. Unfortunately, GFFR has reached a breaking point. GFFR can no longer support the expansion and provide effective emergency services to our citizens.

Chief Jones reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint presentation to provide supporting evidence of the 51 years of geographical growth within the community and the challenges GFFR is facing:




Who is Great Falls Fire Rescue?

- 1989 - 1433 Calls for service
- 1994 - GFFD begins responding to **ALL** medical emergencies
- 2000 - Advanced Life Support (ALS) medical services begins
- 2001 - GFFR personnel selected to become Paramedics

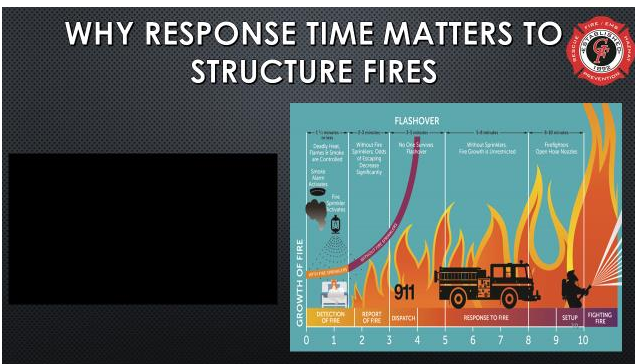
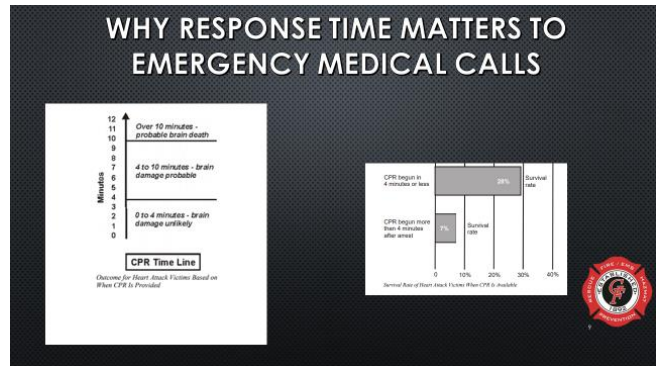
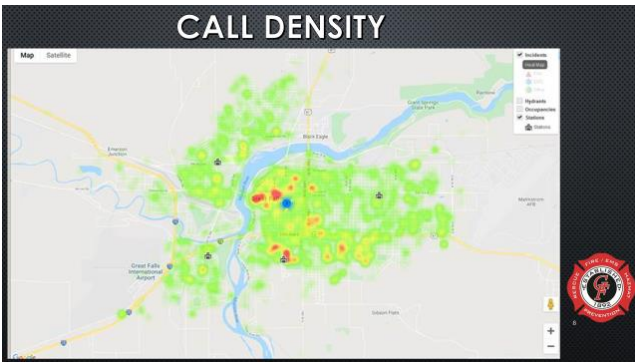
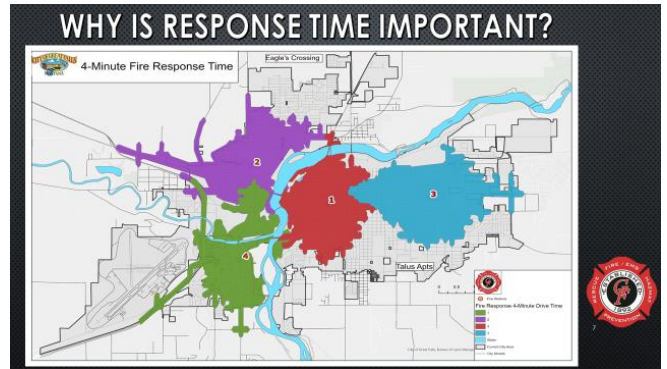


- 2006 - Independent evaluation of the Pre-hospital Emergency Medical System (EMS)
- 2009 - Staffing for **A**dequate **F**ire and **E**mergency **R**esponse (**SAFER**) grant awarded to the City of Great Falls
- Calls for service 5839



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NFPA 1710

- 15 Personnel required for combatting a single-family residential fire.
- GFFR currently has 13 Personnel to accomplish this task.



Great Falls Fire Rescue current response time compared to Montana Class 1 Cities:

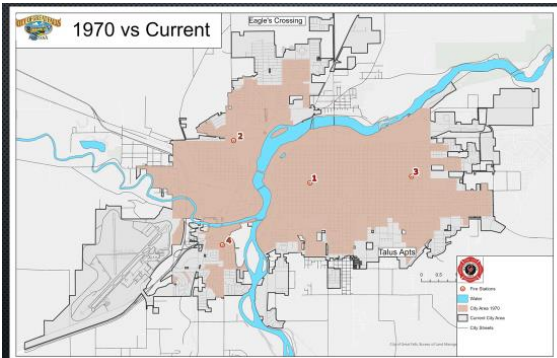
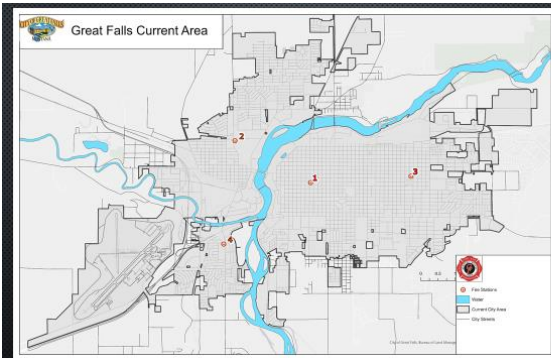
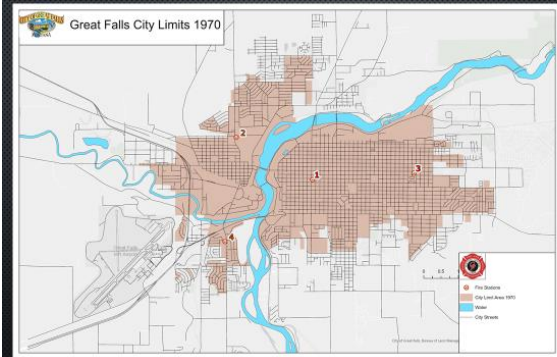
Emergent Response "Lights and Sirens"

- Butte- 5:16
- Billings- 5:25 *Currently looking to add 2 additional Fire Stations
- Bozeman- 5:48 *Currently looking to add 1 additional Fire Station
- Great Falls- 5:58
- Missoula- 6:04 *Currently looking to add 1 additional Fire Station
- Helena- 6:30 *Currently looking to add 1 additional Fire Station



What has contributed to longer response times?

- Geographical Size
1970- 14 square miles 2020- 23 square miles
- Population
1970- 60,091 2020- 57,117
- Call for Service
1970- 825 2020- 8575
- GFFR Personnel
1970- 69 Firefighters 2020- 60 Firefighters
(Does not include Fire Prevention or administrative staff)



Operational changes that have been made to address the issues of long response times and call volume.



What has been successful?

- Grants
- Paramedics
- Response profile



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Current Department Actions

- THE #1 REQUEST DURING BUDGET PRESENTATION OVER THE LAST 14 YEARS HAS BEEN ADDITIONAL FIREFIGHTERS.
- DUE TO GENERAL FUND CONSTRAINTS, THIS REQUEST HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO APPROVE BECAUSE OF THE ADDITIONAL NUMBER OF FIREFIGHTERS NEEDED TO STAFF AN ADDITIONAL UNIT.



IMPLEMENTING "CRITERIA BASED DISPATCHING"

MED 3

- "Emergent Response"
- Unconscious or not Breathing
 - Signs of Shock
 - Respiratory Distress
 - Chest pain
 - Decreased Level of Consciousness
 - GSW, Stabbing, Penetrating Injury

MED 1

- "Non-emergent Response"
- Minor Injury Isolated
 - Fracture/dislocation of Finger/Toe
 - Minor Lacerations w/controlled bleeding
 - Fever/Cough
 - Headache
 - Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea



What's Next?

WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CRITERIA BASED DISPATCHING, GFFR HAS MADE ALL THE ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL CHANGES WE CAN IN PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE READINESS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY



Questions

1. What is the Commission's expectations of GFFR? Is the department meeting the community needs satisfactorily?
2. What can GFFR do to further assist the City Commission with understanding its needs and concerns with regard to community services?
3. Would the Commission rather hear from GFFR department professionals/experts or retain an outside perspective to assist with long range planning needs?



Great Falls Fire Rescue and the City of Great Falls adopted Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) Guidelines that establish "Criteria Based Dispatch" in 2016.

EMD provides the emergency medical services (EMS) community with an effective tool to triage patients and efficiently utilize EMS resources. The City of Great Falls EMD guidelines allows for the assessment of 911 calls to determine if an emergent response (Med 3) or a non-emergent response (Med 1) is needed.

Fire Chief Jones reported that, starting July 1, 2021, GFFR will no longer respond to MED 1 (Non-emergent) medical calls for service. Determinations will be based on the EMD "Criteria Based Dispatching" due to the following:

- Lack of response resources available to handle the ever-increasing call volume.
- 58% of the time GFFR has multiple calls over-lapping causing increases in response times.
- 51 years of continual growth of the City boundaries has increased response times from the current station locations.
- Apply "Right-Resourcing" to be available for the types of "Emergent" calls to save lives and save property.
- By eliminating MED 1 calls, GFFR will reduce call volume by approximately 28%.

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Chief Jones concluded that to continue to meet the community's needs now and into the future, the City must address the deficiencies GFFR faces due to continued geographical growth and expansion of the City's boundaries and increase in response times by applying an "Industry Standard Best Practices Principle." To accomplish this, he asked the Commission the following:

1. What is the Commission's expectations of GFFR? Is the Department meeting the community needs satisfactorily?
2. What can GFFR do to further assist the Commission with understanding its needs and concerns with regard to community services?
3. Would the Commission rather hear from GFFR department professionals/experts or retain an outside perspective to assist with long range planning needs?

Mayor Kelly responded that, due to the lack of time, the Commission would revisit this topic again if needed because it is a critical community conversation.

Commissioner Robinson commented that the stats are shocking. GFFR Chief Jones' implementation of the Med 1 and Med 3 policy is a positive step. He acknowledged that it is just a scratch in the surface of the problem. The problem is very serious and needs to continue to be addressed.

Chief Jones responded that the 28% reduction in call volume gets GFFR back to 2009 numbers where FEMA recognized the need for 16 additional Firefighters.

Commissioner Robinson would like to see a study on geographic growth and location(s) for new fire station(s).

Chief Jones responded to Commissioner Houck's inquiries that:

- Helena Fire Department's staffing levels include two fire stations operating with nine staff members per shift and ran 3500 calls last year, which is less than half of Great Falls. Helena is looking to add a fire station by the new business complex.
- The ambulance does not go to lift assist calls, lift assists are not included in the Med 1 category, and it appears the Commission is guiding GFFR to charge fees for lift assists.
- GFFR has seen an increase in structural fires – approximately 195 fires last year.
- Citizens that do not receive a City fire department response generally pay one to one and a half times higher rates for their homeowners insurance.
- GFFR will get the word out about the new policy. Justin Grohs at Great Falls Emergency Services (GFES) has been made aware of the changes. GFFR will respond to Med 1 calls if GFES is fully committed.

Commissioner Moe inquired if the increase between 1970 and 2020 is attributed to an expanded medical mission within GFFR.

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Chief Jones clarified that up until 1994 GFFR only ran resuscitator calls, major vehicle wrecks with entanglement, and calls of significant nature.

With regard to question #3, Commissioner Moe commented that GFFR is meeting her expectations, she understands the needs and concerns, and what she does not understand is where the City will get the money to meet them. The City needs to find another way to provide the needed staffing.

Commissioner Tryon inquired if a fifth station was needed in Great Falls.

Chief Jones responded absolutely, and the City should be planning for a sixth.

Mayor Kelly commented that GFFR does a great job explaining its mission, the response times and challenges the department had, and that the City is far short of providing funds to make things better for GFFR. The other problem is the City is running into growth restraints due to response times. Developers need to be made aware of where they are building may be outside of legitimate response times and either deal with that or help come up with a funding mechanism to support that development.

Mayor Kelly suggested that this conversation be revisited to come up with ideas, whether it is a Fire Protection District that can be created or alternative revenue sources that other cities are using to find a creative new or old way that could be effective to find the funding for this important mission for the community.

Chief Jones clarified that he is meeting with Directors Raymond and Skubinna and the Police Chief on proposals for future developments and expressing the City's needs for public safety in general.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that two special budget work sessions are scheduled for June 21 – 22, 2021. The baseline budget process has been used for the proposed FY 2022 budget. The inflationary factor and permissive medical levy were not implemented last budget year. This year's budget is being approached the same way. The City's reduced entitlement amount will cause the City to use fund balance to offset the revenue losses just to sustain that baseline budget with very small adjustments that have occurred. There will be a conversation with the Commission about the desire to look at using the inflationary factor and/or the permissive medical levy this year. The FY 2022 budget will be looked at first, and then the CARES/ARP funds at a later point. The annual budget presentation is set for July 6, 2021.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of June 15, 2021 at 6:55 p.m.